

NORTHERLY RANGE EXTENSION FOR *CTENOTUS ARCANUS* (SQUMATA: SCINCIDAE) IN QUEENSLAND. *Memoirs of the Queensland Museum* 49(2): 572. 2004:- *Ctenotus arcanus* (Czechura & Wombey, 1982) belongs to a group of swift moving, diurnal skinks. Like most members of this genus, the species is characterised by a series of dark longitudinal stripes and upper lateral spots (Cogger, 2000). *C. arcanus* typically has a coppery-brown, dorsal surface with a pale-edged, dark vertebral stripe which reduces down to a line on the nape (Wilson & Swan, 2003). A pale coloured, narrow dorso-lateral stripe also extends from above the eye through to the tail (Czechura & Wombey, 1982). This stripe is usually bordered above by a narrow, black stripe and below by a much broader stripe, which encloses a series of well-defined, white dots (Wilson & Swan, 2003). A white mid-lateral line extends from the snout to the tail. The ventral surface is pale coloured with a bit of grey flecking on the edges. The limbs are reddish brown to olive in colour with small, dark stripes. Adults usually average 90mm snout-vent length (Cogger, 2000).

This species favours rocky, eucalypt dominated open forest and woodlands, heaths and the margins of wet sclerophyll forests (Czechura & Wombey, 1982). In Queensland, the species is known to occur from Kroombit Tops (24°21'59"S, 150°58'59"E) south to Burnett Gorge (28°18'47"S, 152°33'25"E) (EPAA, 2003). Wilson & Swan (2003) define the range for the species as continuing further south into northern New South Wales and they also documented a disjunct population around the Carnarvon Ranges in Central Queensland. The Carnarvon population was found on the Consuelo Tableland on the Mount Moffatt section of Carnarvon National Park (C. Eddie, QPWS pers. comm.). The Western Australian Museum's database (FaunaBase) contains records of *C. arcanus* from Kroombit Tops (24°21'59"S, 151°01'59"E) south to Boorook (28°45'00"S, 152°09'59"E) west to the Carnarvon's (24°54'59"S, 148°02'59"E) and east to Stradbroke (27°33'59"S, 153°25'59"E) and Fraser Islands (25°32'59"S, 153°01'59"E) (WAM, 2003).

In May 2003, a systematic fauna survey was conducted at Eungella National Park, Crediton State Forest and Homevale Resource Reserve. Vertebrate fauna were surveyed using a combination of Elliott, cage, pit fall and harp traps, bat triplines, spotlighting, active searches and bird censuses. The survey found a total of 167 vertebrate species including *C. arcanus*.

The species was caught in a pit trap at a site in Homevale Resource Reserve (21°20'30"S, 148°32'6"E) and at a site in Crediton State Forest (21°16'44"S, 148°31'24"E). The vegetation at the Homevale Resource Reserve site consisted of a mixed *Corymbia citriodora* and *Eucalyptus drepanophylla* woodland with an understorey dominated by *Themeda triandra*.

Lophostemon confertus and *Xanthorrhoea* sp. were also common in the shrub layer at the site. The site was considered to belong to Regional Ecosystem 8.12.7c (EPA, 2003b). The Crediton State Forest site contained *Corymbia trachyphloia*, *Corymbia intermedia*, *Eucalyptus portuensis*, *Lophostemon suaveolens* tall open woodland with a sparse mid storey of *Allocasuarina littoralis* and an understorey dominated by *Xanthorrhoea* sp. and *Imperata cylindrica*. This site was considered to be Regional Ecosystem 8.12.7 (EPA, 2003b). A total of three specimens were vouchered and sent to the Queensland Museum (QMJ79953, QMJ79968, QMJ79955).

This new record extends the known range of the species by approximately 450km. The question arises whether this record represents an isolated population or whether the species distribution is continuous along the Great Dividing Range north of Kroombit Tops. Although the species is regarded as being common in Queensland under the *Queensland Nature Conservation (Wildlife) regulation 1994*, more fauna surveys are required to target the mesic habitats along the Range to define the exact range limits for this species.

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John Augusteyn, *Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service PO Box 3130 Rockhampton Shopping Fair 4701, Australia; 21 January 2004.*